United Nations

United Nations Environment Programme

Report of the Governing Council

Sixth special session (29-31 May 2000)

General Assembly

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Introduction

1. The first Global Ministerial Environment Forum/the sixth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was held in Malmö, Sweden, from 29 to 31 May 2000. It was convened in pursuance of paragraph 1 (g) of Governing Council decision 20/17 of 5 February 1999, entitled "Views of the Governing Council on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements"; paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements"; and paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, entitled "Pattern of conferences"; and in accordance with rules 5 and 6 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council.

Chapter I
Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

2. The first Global Ministerial Environment Forum/sixth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme was opened at 11 a.m. on Monday, 29 May 2000, by Mr. László Miklós, President of the Council.

3. In his opening statement, Mr. Miklós expressed his deep appreciation to the Government of Sweden for the warm reception and very generous hospitality extended to participants and for the excellent facilities placed at their disposal.

4. The inaugural Global Ministerial Environment Forum, he said, represented an opportunity for reflection on how policies to protect the environment had been implemented, while at the same time charting a new way forward. The current meeting would be another milestone in the quest for sustainable development, which represented a basic precondition for peace and collective human security for global economic order. The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 had been the single most influential event in the evolution of the international environmental movement. For the North, it had been a direct challenge to unthinking and unregulated patterns of production and consumption. For the South, it had been a challenge to the assumption that the western industrial model was the most effective route to rapid and equitable development. It had also been the first major call for global partnership, for the deep involvement of all in environmental matters. The final goal and the primary reason for the politics of the environment and sustainable development was to ensure the best possible physical status of the environment. Political, legal and economic instruments should fit that final goal, not the opposite. Market forces alone were not sufficient to address poverty adequately. Concerted efforts by developing States and assistance from the international community were required.

5. There was an urgent need to develop and implement new philosophies and to get away from the approach of "business as usual". There needed to be a rationalization of the costs between administration and the real costs of physical actions. Sustainable development also called for transparent control of the use of natural resources and other environmental values, independent from the individual economic interests of stakeholders.

6. UNEP was the most experienced and the most central United Nations agency for sustainable development. The five main directions of the current UNEP programme, adopted by the Governing Council at its twentieth session, showed truly functional features. Each of them was crucial and addressed global problems. The recent period showed that sustainable development needed integrated approaches. A special case of the integrated approach lay in synergy between environmental conventions, strengthening the enforcement and compliance mechanisms, and embracing the use of market instruments. It was also necessary to build stronger partnerships with the private sector and other communities, since it was clear that private investment dwarfed official development assistance in terms of funds. A change in value systems could only be brought about by the involvement of civil society.

7. In conclusion, he called upon each participant to examine the state of the environment, consider carefully the action to take and then address the common task of preserving both the conditions and the forms of life on the Earth in a mood of resolution and confidence. However complex sustainable development was, the foundation of environmental policies was the physical state of the environment, and the main task

continued to lie in ensuring that it remained in good health.

8. A videotaped message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, was played to the Forum. He conveyed his best wishes for the success of the meeting, which he believed would help the United Nations rise to the challenges of environmentally sustainable development. Despite the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and such achievements as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, unsustainable practices continued to be pursued in daily life. Governments had failed to protect resources and ecosystems and were even in danger of failing to keep up the debate on the issues. To tackle the growing problems, there were four priority needs: for a major effort to promote public education and increase awareness in civil society; for Governments to take fully into account environmental issues and green accounting practices; for Governments to enforce environmental agreements, cut subsidies to unsustainable activities, and increase incentives for sound environmental practices; and for sound scientific information. The dawn of the new millennium marked a time for action and for a renewed commitment to environmental conservation and stewardship.

9. Also at the opening meeting Mr. Ingvar Carlsson, former Prime Minister of Sweden, welcomed the participants to Malmö on behalf of the Government and people of Sweden. Noting the number of environment ministers gathered, he said it was a hopeful sign for the future that so many of them had decided to come to Malmö and discuss the major environmental challenges for the new millennium. He recalled that Sweden had hosted the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, which had marked the beginning of far-reaching international cooperation to counter the negative environmental side-effects of scientific and technological advances. No single country could solve its environmental problems through unilateral action, and neither could any country escape responsibility for its impact on the environment.

10. The time had come to forge new partnerships between Governments, the private sector and civil society to help alleviate poverty and the threats to human health and the environment caused by ignorance and negligence. The Global Ministerial Environment Forum provided an opportunity to send a strong signal to the Millennium Summit of the United Nations that environmental problems would not go away and that environmental considerations would have to be integrated into all aspects of society, with everyone taking part. It was a difficult task, which could be achieved if new partnerships were forged and new ways found.

11. The Forum also heard a speech by Yvonne Maingey and Philip Tinker, two 12-year-old representatives of the UNEP Millennium International Children's Forum, which had been held in Eastbourne, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, from 22 to 24 May 2000, bringing together over 700 children from 11 countries. The children described their own pledges to safeguard the environment and called upon those attending the Forum to meet the following challenges: enforce environmental laws, especially on water and pollution; provide clean water to all within the next 10 years; make recycling fun and provide more recycling bins; find environment-friendly alternatives to plastic bags by the year 2004; and promote the use of clean energy.

12. A statement was also made by Ms. Massumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and head of its environment organization, who read a message to the Forum from President Khatami, on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and in relation to the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. In his message President Khatami stressed the need for changes in the relation between human beings and nature. An end should be put to the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, alienation of humans from nature, egoistical attitudes and lifestyles, and unethical practices towards natural resources. Humans, who were not the masters of nature but its children, partners and protectors, could enjoy its endless benefits only if they opted for harmony and coexistence with nature instead of spiritual and physical alienation and attempts to harness and destroy it. Increased accountability on the part of the international community and the adoption of moral criteria in dealing with nature should accompany the quest for long-term and sustainable advantages instead of material and short-lived benefits. Development should not be equated with environmental destruction, consumerism, material wealth and supremacy. A major step in that direction could be taken through dialogue between cultures, an urgent imperative in the context of the upcoming Year of Dialogue among Civilizations,

which could be instrumental in prompting international organizations to adopt a spiritual approach to nature based on humility.

13. A statement was made by Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz on behalf of 45 environment and development organizations which had met at a forum of non-governmental organizations in Malmö on 28 May 2000. She regretted that, while the 1990s had been "a decade of global agreements", it had not also been a decade of solutions. The circle of paralysis had to be broken, through a spirit of renewed resolve and conviction, and what the world needed from the Environment Forum was integrated rather than piecemeal solutions and processes that promoted inclusion rather than exclusion. Poverty, ecological degradation, conflict and insecurity were the symptoms of a common underlying malaise — environmental and social injustice. Their solution lay in sustainable development. The second Earth Summit should not remain a mere anniversary marking unfulfilled hopes and aspirations but should become the culmination of the process that began in Stockholm, in the shape of a global conference on sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the existing international commitments from Agenda 21 should be fully implemented. There was a need for the broad and meaningful participation of civil society groups and organizations in decision-making on environmental matters, and the participation of young people, the elderly, women and indigenous peoples must be ensured.

14. She welcomed the UNEP initiative to establish a permanent dialogue with non-governmental organizations but stressed the need for the involvement of civil society at a much higher level than hitherto. That was particularly important in the process leading to the second Earth Summit. Non-governmental organizations were well positioned to play a central role in monitoring compliance with international commitments by Governments and international organizations. At the same time, the United Nations system had to guard against the risks inherent in partnerships with commercial organizations, fruitful though they could be.

15. An opening statement was also made by Mr. Klaus Töpfer, the Executive Director of UNEP. After outlining the sequence of events that had led to the holding of the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum, he expressed appreciation to the Swedish authorities for the contribution they had made to the organization of the Forum in Sweden, where UNEP had been born as a result of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Thanks were also due to the Committee of Permanent Representatives and to non-governmental organizations for their contributions.

16. The *Global Environment Outlook*, which UNEP had published in 1999, had highlighted growing problems — imbalances in productivity and the distribution of goods and services, rapid population growth, increasing inequity in the global distribution of development, inadequate environmental stewardship, a global freshwater crisis, unsustainable exploitation and depletion of natural resources, and land degradation. Though much progress had been made since 1972, especially in the field of institutions and legislation, more was needed. Yet the message was essentially an optimistic one: mankind had the resources, human and material, to tackle the key problems of poverty and the need to change consumption patterns. The United Nations Millennium Assembly would have the task of discussing the role of the Organization in the twenty-first century, and the Ministerial Forum could make an important contribution to that discussion, as it could to the review of progress made since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

B. Attendance

17. The following States members of the Governing Council were represented at the session:[1]

Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Austria
Bahamas
Belarus
Belgium
Benin
Botswana
Brazil
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Canada
China
Colombia
Comoros
Cuba
Denmark
Egypt
France
Gambia
Germany
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Kazakhstan
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Malawi
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Poland
Republic of Korea
Republic of Moldova
Russian Federation
Samoa

Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Slovakia
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Thailand
Turkey
Uganda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Venezuela
Zimbabwe

18. The following States not members of the Governing Council but Members of the United Nations or members of a specialized agency were represented by observers:

Algeria
Angola
Australia
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Bhutan
Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Djibouti
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Finland
Gabon
Greece
Guinea-Bissau
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Jordan
Kenya
Kiribati
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Latvia
Lebanon
Lesotho
Liberia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Malaysia
Maldives
Mali
Malta
Mauritania
Mauritius
Monaco
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Nicaragua
Niger
Oman
Peru
Philippines
Portugal
Romania
Rwanda
Singapore
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Togo
Tunisia
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United Republic of Tanzania
Vanuatu
Viet Nam
Yemen
Zambia

19. The observer for Palestine to the United Nations also participated.

20. The following United Nations bodies, Secretariat units and convention secretariats were represented:

Economic Commission for Europe

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

21. The following specialized agencies were represented:

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

The International Atomic Energy Agency was also represented.

22. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented:

Commonwealth Secretariat, European Community, Helsinki Commission, League of Arab States, Nordic Council of Ministers, Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, World Conservation Union.

23. In addition, 47 non-governmental and private-sector organizations were represented by observers.

C. Officers

24. At the 1st plenary meeting, on 29 May 2000, the Council confirmed the nomination of Mr. Hossein-Moeini Meybodi (Islamic Republic of Iran) to serve as Rapporteur, to replace Mr. Hossein Fadaei (Islamic Republic of Iran), who was unable to complete his term.

25. The remaining officers elected by the Governing Council at its twentieth regular session continued to serve in their respective capacities at the sixth special session, in accordance with rule 19 of the rules of procedure. Accordingly, the officers of the Council at the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/sixth special session were as follows:

President:
Mr. László Miklós (Slovakia)

Vice-Presidents:
Mr. Jean P. Nsengiyumva (Burundi)
Mr. Leandro Arellano (Mexico)
Mr. Jan Pronk (Netherlands)

Rapporteur:
Mr. Hossein-Moeini Meybodi (Islamic Republic of Iran)

26. The closing meeting of the session, on 31 May 2000, was chaired by Mr. Kjell Larsson (Sweden).

D. Credentials of representatives

27. In accordance with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure, the Bureau examined the credentials of representatives attending the session. The Bureau found the credentials in order and so reported to the Council, which approved the Bureau's report at the 5th plenary meeting, on 31 May 2000.

E. Adoption of the agenda

28. At the 1st plenary meeting, the Council adopted the following agenda for the session, on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.VI/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organization of the session:
   (a) Adoption of the agenda;
   (b) Organization of the work of the session.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Major environmental challenges in the new century.
5. Private sector and the environment: preparing for the twenty-first century.
6. Civil society: responsibility and role vis-à-vis the environment in a globalized world.
7. Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme.
8. Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21.
9. Malmö Declaration.
10. Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.
11. Adoption of the report.
12. Closure of the session.

F. Organization of the work of the session

29. At the 1st plenary meeting, the Council considered the organization of the work of the session in the light of the recommendations contained in the annotated provisional agenda and organization of work and the provisional timetable of meetings suggested by the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.VI/1/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1).

30. The Council agreed that the following agenda items would be addressed in plenary meetings organized in the form of ministerial consultations: item 1 (Opening of the session), item 2 (Organization of the session), item 3 (Credentials of representatives), item 4 (Major environmental challenges in the new century), item 5 (Private sector and the environment), item 6 (Civil society), item 9 (Malmö Declaration), item 11 (Adoption of the report), and item 12 (Closure of the session).

31. The Council also decided to set up a Committee of the Whole, under the chairmanship of Mr. Leandro Arellano, Vice-President of the Council, to address agenda item 7 (Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme), item 8 (Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the implementation of Agenda 21, and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21) and item 10 (Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme).

32. The Council further decided to set up an open-ended working group, under the chairmanship of Mr. Kjell Larsson (Sweden), with a core membership of

three representatives from each regional group, to consider agenda item 9 (Malmö Declaration) and report back to the plenary.

Chapter II
Account of proceedings

A. Major environmental challenges in the new century

33. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 29 May 2000, the Forum took up its consideration of the above agenda item (item 4). Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, introduced Mr. Konrad von Moltke, the moderator of the meeting, together with the guest speakers who had been invited to make presentations: Mr. Mario Molina, Nobel laureate and Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Mr. M. S. Swaminathan, expert on the "green revolution" and holder of the UNESCO Chair of Ecotechnology.

34. In his opening remarks, Mr. von Moltke explained that the convening of the current meeting with its incomparable format — bringing together government ministers, moderated by a scientist, to discuss emerging global issues — showed a willingness to experiment with new institutional forms. However, he believed that it was necessary for such a forum to be innovative, because of the nature of the problems involved.

35. In his presentation, Mr. Molina addressed issues of the science/policy interface, with particular reference to problems concerning the atmosphere — namely, ozone depletion, the greenhouse effect and atmospheric pollution. He drew attention to the difficulty of establishing with scientific certainty whether a perceived atmospheric phenomenon was a result of human activity or not, and noted the need to step outside science on certain occasions and make value judgements. In conclusion, he said that the success of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was due in good part to the Multilateral Fund, which entailed the transfer of a relatively small volume of resources to tackle a global problem. He believed that it was necessary to approach other emerging atmospheric problems in the same way.

36. Mr. Swaminathan addressed issues of food security and economic access to food and water, in the face of rapidly increasing population pressure. He noted the need for an approach involving integrated natural resources management; for local community conservation of traditional land races and folk varieties of plants; and for a new paradigm which would give local people in biosphere reserves a role in their management. Stressing the need to recognize and reward local conservation and knowledge of plants, he believed that the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) should harmonize their activities with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The gene revolution, the ecotech revolution and the information revolution were all emerging. But it was necessary to bring the latest findings to local rural people in an appropriate way: through learning by doing. In conclusion, he stressed that environment ministers needed to conserve and strengthen the ecological foundations of food security.

37. Following the presentations, 32 ministers and heads of delegation made oral contributions. The participants welcomed the interactive debate and the innovative approach initiated by the Forum. The issues highlighted during the discussion are outlined in the paragraphs below.

38. Climate change, loss of biodiversity, land degradation, including desertification and deforestation, the water crisis — the most important environmental issue of the twenty-first century — and its implications for food security and increased environmental emergencies, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, environmental mismanagement and the chemical threat were identified as major environmental challenges. Arsenic was considered to pose a serious environmental problem in certain countries.

39. The negative impact of the globalized economy, the debt burden, poverty, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and the role of the global media in encouraging mass consumption, decreasing official development assistance and the unbalanced distribution of private investment in developing countries were identified as the root causes of environmental degradation.

40. The relationship between science and environmental policy was highlighted, as was the need to reduce scientific uncertainties, since environmental policies rested on a foundation of scientific research. It

was pointed out that in recent decades a major change had occurred in the public perception of science and technology, which had shifted from being part of the problem to being part of the solution.

41. The potential of new technologies, and in particular environmentally sound technology and information technology, for responding to environmental challenges was stressed, as was the need for the transfer of technology to developing countries.

42. There was a need to engage the private sector and promote a new corporate ethic of environmental sustainability, especially in relation to the gene revolution, whose benefits had yet to be made available to the poor to increase crop production.

43. The need to integrate environmental considerations into the mainstream of economic decision-making, the importance of bearing socio-economic considerations in mind in the implementation of environmental conventions, and the relation between trade and environment were discussed.

44. It was generally agreed that the problems and the solutions were known, and the resources and means to act were available. What was required was a new political will and a sense of urgency to take action. The implementation and enforcement of already agreed environmental legal instruments was considered a priority.

45. The need to review environmental institutions and architecture in the light of the environmental threats of the new century was discussed. While welcoming the progress achieved so far, it was agreed that UNEP should be further strengthened and should play a leading role in promoting a holistic approach to environmental issues, inter alia, within the United Nations system. UNEP's financial resources should be increased and their flow made more predictable.

46. It was also unanimously agreed that there was a need for a new North/South global partnership to address the environmental challenges of the new century. The idea of a world sustainable development strategy was suggested. It was also suggested that the declaration to be adopted by the Forum should contain an agenda for action whose implementation could be monitored at future meetings.

B. Private sector and the environment: preparing for the twenty-first century

47. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 30 May 2000, the Forum took up its consideration of the above agenda item (item 5). Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, introduced Mr. Lin See Yan, Vice-President of the Bank of Malaysia and financial adviser to the Commission on Sustainable Development, as the moderator of the meeting. He also introduced the three guest speakers who had been invited to make presentations: Mr. Jürgen Dormann, Chairman of the Board of AVENTIS; Mr. Masashi Kaneko, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Nikko Securities Company Ltd; and Mr. B. Brock, Chief Executive Officer of the Tetra Pak group of companies.

48. In his presentation, Mr. Dormann described the main features of the new economy (high growth; high value-added; based on research and development and intellectual property; driven by information technology; service-oriented; and generating new knowledge and information) and contrasted it with the old economy (mass production and distribution of physical goods; slow and linear growth; low innovative potential; physical resource inputs; high environmental impact). With its transformation of education, the new economy helped to alleviate the environmental problems that stemmed from poverty. Decentralization of job locations through modern telecommunications created new jobs in remote areas, also in developing countries. As an evolution of the old economy but optimizing human and physical resources and reducing waste, the new economy held the key to sustainable development. But for innovation to be accepted, a link to the stakeholders was needed. To contribute to problem-solving it was necessary to protect intellectual property rights and introduce new forms of public/private partnerships to use the full possibilities of the new economy.

49. Mr. Kaneko explained how socially responsible investment had been initiated and developed by the Nikko Eco Fund in Japan. Companies had been chosen for investment on the basis of a series of screening criteria to gauge their positive contribution to the environment and its conservation. Despite lack of consumer familiarity with the Fund, it had attracted a surprising number of investors, particularly young women, and was now one of the company's leading trusts. Some 36 other companies had introduced similar

funds, and the market for them currently exceeded $2 billion. Further growth of such funds would be stimulated by reduced taxes on dividends for green investors, a single standard for environmental reporting and accounting, and compulsory publication of environmental reports. Such funds benefited investors (by providing investment tools for environmental protection), companies (where "green listing" of their stock was seen as adding value) and the environment (through enforcement of environmental legislation).

50. Mr. Brock outlined the history and role of the liquid packaging industry, stressing that, by analysing the life cycle of the product, good packaging could save resources in the chain of use, while fulfilling its protective role. He warned against the use of environmental tools and declarations in the marketing of products, particularly where there were no fixed and standard criteria. The rapid changes deriving from globalization were eroding the role of the nation State in combating environmental degradation. Efficient resource use meant that, in some areas, private companies were ahead of Governments in resource management. Industry's role lay in providing ecologically safe products in a responsible way, taking environmental considerations into account in their design and monitoring their performance with set indicators. Recycling policies were of little use if consumers were not educated to make use of them. Provision of such education and information was an important role for Governments, alongside the setting of standards and definitions and the design of appropriate economic instruments for use by industry. Future solutions depended not on whether all the stakeholders cooperated but on how they cooperated.

51. Following the presentations, 32 ministers and heads of delegation made oral contributions. During the discussion, the following issues were raised by various ministers and heads of delegation.

52. The respective roles and characteristics of the "new" and "old" economies in relation to the environment and the interrelationship between them were discussed. The important role of small and medium-sized enterprises in many countries was also stressed.

53. The driving forces of the new economy included information and communication technology and their potential contribution to the objectives of environmental sustainability. Information and education were also of great importance in empowering consumers to make enlightened choices.

54. The emerging sectors of the new economy, including the biology and biotechnology revolution and the ethical and social components of sustainable development, were highlighted.

55. The need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the private sector and government in achieving sustainable development was discussed, together with the need to reconcile environmental objectives with corporate competition and profitability. It was also necessary to monitor carefully the interface between trade and environment and create stronger institutions which could handle disputes that might arise and ensure that environmental agreements were on a par with trade agreements.

56. The responsibility of the private sector could be pinpointed using the polluter-pays principle and a requirement that they should make use of best available techniques. The development of liability systems was a valuable step. The importance of the precautionary approach was also stressed. Reference was also made to the need to avoid the transfer of polluting industries and their problems to areas, especially in developing countries, which lacked a capacity to handle them.

57. The need for accepted corporate environmental standards and norms and the development of corporate environmental performance indicators was mentioned. Systematic reporting by the private sector on its environmental performance was suggested, as was the conclusion of environmental codes of conduct for business.

58. Reference was made to the need for "greening" international financial markets, in particular in relation to environmental impact assessments. In that regard, support was expressed for UNEP's insurance initiative.

59. The role of fiscal and economic instruments in promoting corporate environmental responsibility, including the internalization of external costs, was discussed in the context of the promotion of eco-efficiency. The positive start made with the Kyoto Protocol should be replicated in other areas.

60. Concerning the transfer of environmental technology, there was a need for private/public partnership for achieving sustainable development, alleviating poverty and creating employment. The role of educated consumers in promoting a life-cycle

economy was emphasized. It was suggested that a new corporate ethic centred on the public interest should be promoted. Support was also expressed for the Global Compact initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General.

C. Civil society: responsibility and role vis-à-vis the environment in a globalized world

61. At its 4th plenary meeting, on 30 May 2000, the Forum took up its consideration of the above agenda item (item 6). Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, introduced Mr. Robert Lamb, Director of the Television Trust for the Environment, as the moderator of the meeting, together with the guest speakers who had been invited to make presentations: Mr. Charles Alexander, international editor of Time magazine; Ms. Yolanda Kakabadse, President of the World Conservation Union (IUCN); and Mr. Martin Khor, Director of the Third World Network.

62. In his opening remarks, Mr. Alexander highlighted the significance of civil society and of the media and free non-governmental organizations, in particular, in drawing attention to emerging problems and uncovering corruption and bad practices. However, in contrast to the coverage of local situations, global environmental problems received no prominence in many of the commercial media, particularly in the United States. Where Governments paid heed to corporate lobbyists, environmental legislation was often slow to be implemented. Corporations were changing, and the growing interest in green products meant they were currently promoting the environmental message in partnership with the media. But Governments should give non-governmental organizations the same access they gave to big business interests. To ensure that proper environmental legislation was adopted, corporate campaign financing should be stopped. In the coming century, there was no alternative to a lifestyle based on sustainable development, and leaders had to be brought to the same conclusion.

63. In her opening remarks, Ms. Kakabadse noted that, while non-governmental organizations had hitherto been excluded from debate and decision-making, in a globalized world they were proliferating and were also increasingly being viewed as responsible partners. Interactions were now taking place at global, regional and national levels. The many types of groups in civil society spoke with a number of different voices and could not easily be categorized. They played an important bridging function. However, there were weaknesses, such as representational problems, and lack of institutional capacities to make proposals, to negotiate and to intervene. National and international organizations needed to set up a clear framework for dialogue, concertation, participation and follow-up with civil society groups, and in that context she wondered whether it might be valuable to introduce some kind of certification for such groups. In conclusion, she drew a distinction between globalized action and action for the global commons.

64. In his presentation, Mr. Khor highlighted key issues from the perspective of civil society, calling, in particular, for preservation of the link between the environment and development; a change in the economic model adopted from the North; putting into operation the UNCED concept of common but differentiated responsibility; the reform of global economic institutions, which currently promoted the wrong kind of consumption patterns; a review of the intellectual property rights regime; avoidance of past mistakes in technology assessment and choice; and applying lessons from the Commission on Sustainable Development on how to give neglected sustainable ecological agriculture a chance. Describing a number of ways to improve the contributions by civil society, he stressed that relations should be strengthened with UNEP, as they had been with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), at both headquarters and regional offices. Moreover, UNEP should network with non-governmental organizations much more than in the past.

65. Following the presentations, 30 ministers and heads of delegation made oral contributions and discussed the raised issues.

66. It was noted that the current meeting marked the first time that such an interactive debate on the role and responsibility of civil society vis-à-vis the environment had been held at the level of ministers in an intergovernmental forum. Such a dialogue was welcomed.

67. The unique role of the community of non-governmental organizations, at local, regional, national and international levels, in putting environmental

issues on the agenda and promoting social innovation was recognized. That role was increasing in importance, as evidenced by the growing number and diversity of the representatives of civil society. In addition, it was necessary to foster a sense of common purpose among all actors and the national and international community and to better coordinate their work so as not to fragment their efforts.

68. Meeting the environmental challenges of the world and ensuring the sustainability of environmental policies required the cooperation and full participation of all the actors of society, including non-governmental organizations, local communities, indigenous peoples, local authorities, the scientific community, the media, the private sector, and government. It was suggested that an alliance embracing civil society and the governmental sector at the national and regional levels would help to build confidence in decision-making processes and lead to realistic and implementable decisions. The role of civil society in the preparation and negotiation of international environmental treaties should be enhanced.

69. The role played by the community of non-governmental organizations in establishing UNEP, promoting global environmental agreements, raising environmental public awareness and promoting transparency and non-corrupt practices in environmental decision-making was also noted. Proposals were made for UNEP to strengthen its partnership with non-governmental organizations, inter alia, through a consultative mechanism, focal points and networking.

70. It was agreed that the community of non-governmental organizations could provide a useful bridge between development and environment; action and policy; technology and spiritual matters; science and tradition; urban and rural areas; formal and informal sectors; grass roots and government.

71. The heterogeneity of civil society and the different natures and roles of its actors were considered to be both a challenge and an opportunity. Issues relating to the representativeness, transparency and accountability of groups in civil society were raised, as was the question of whether they had adequate administrative capacity to handle issues of policy-making satisfactorily. The role of non-governmental organizations in environmental impact assessment procedures and other environmental policy issues was discussed. Concern was expressed at the persistence of armed conflicts in Africa, with their adverse impacts on the environment. Emphasis was placed on the important role of women in society, their vulnerability to adverse environmental impacts and the need for their involvement in policy-making and decision-making.

72. Regarding the process for the preparation of the 10-year review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the need was expressed to underscore the importance of including all relevant sectors in discussions and meetings relating to the process at the local, national and regional levels, which would contribute to confidence-building in decision-making at the global level and to realizing decisions and their implementation. To that end, an alliance that included civil society and the government sector at the national and regional levels should be established.

73. Reference was made to the role of the media in relation to environmental education and public awareness. It was considered that there was a need to reconcile the nature and the driving forces of the commercial media with the need for adequate coverage of long-term environmental issues.

74. The need to ensure public access to environmental information was stressed. In that regard, it was proposed that the Executive Director be tasked with exploring the possibility of expanding the Aarhus Convention on a global scale.

Chapter III
Malmö Declaration

75. The draft Malmö Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.3) was introduced by the Chair of the open-ended working group, Mr. Kjell Larsson (Sweden), at the 5th plenary meeting, on 31 May 2000. At the same meeting, the Declaration was adopted unchanged (for the text, see annex I below, decision SS.VI/1).

Chapter IV
Report of the Committee of the Whole

76. The report of the Committee of the Whole (UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.2) was introduced by the

Committee's Rapporteur, Mr. Bernard O. K'Omudho (Kenya), at the 5th plenary meeting, on 31 May 2000. At the same meeting, the Council took note of the report (for the text, see annex II below).

77. The Committee's report contained three draft decisions recommended for adoption by the Council. The draft decisions were adopted without change (for the text of the decisions, see annex I below).

Chapter V
Adoption of the report

78. The present report was adopted at the 5th plenary meeting of the session, on 31 May 2000, on the basis of the draft report contained in document UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.1 and Add.1, and on the understanding that the Rapporteur would be entrusted with finalizing the report in the light of subsequent discussion.

Chapter VI
Closure of the session

79. At the 5th meeting, on 31 May 2000, the Council heard a closing address from the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Ms. Birgitta Dahl. Ms. Dahl said that it was appropriate for the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum to be held in Sweden, which had hosted in 1972 the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which had in turn given birth to the United Nations Environment Programme.

80. The approach adopted by the current meeting had been the right one: identifying challenges, ensuring that the private sector was on board, and relying on those directly affected — civil society. However, one aspect was lacking: the popularly elected representatives in local, regional, national and transnational assemblies. While non-governmental organizations could act as important pressure groups, they often concentrated on one issue or one cluster of related issues, and their internal democratic structure might not always be ideal. Thus, it was also necessary to involve those who were politically responsible and answerable to voters. Today's citizens, noting that political decisions were made at a very high level, might feel that their scope for influencing those decisions was limited or even non-existent. And if citizens felt that they had no say at all, how could they be expected to make the necessary changes in their lifestyles or consumption patterns? If politicians with popular mandates were made obvious parts of the decision-making process, they could go back to voters and act as interpreters, or "ambassadors", for those decisions. One instrument that could — and should — be used to honour commitments from the Earth Summit was the democratically elected body in the form of national Parliaments, as well as regional and local political bodies. All the local Agenda 21s could serve as road maps for sustainable political behaviour on all levels of society.

81. In conclusion, she said that efforts to meet the challenges should be concentrated on the strategic areas of water, energy, transport and waste management and should target the poor in remote rural areas and megacity slums. Here lay the most acute risks of environmental and social disasters, but also the greatest potential for successful results at bearable costs.

82. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/sixth special session of the Governing Council closed.

Notes

[1] The membership of the Governing Council was determined by elections held at the 56th plenary meeting of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, held on 26 November 1997, and the 38th plenary meeting of the fifty-fourth session, held on 25 October 1999.

Annex I

Decisions adopted by the Governing Council at its Global Ministerial Environment Forum/sixth special session

Decision No.	*Title*	*Date of Adoption*	*Page*
SS.VI/1	Malmö Ministerial Declaration	31 May 2000	13
SS.VI/2	Activities of the United Nations Environment Programme	31 May 2000	16
SS.VI/3	Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21	31 May 2000	16
SS.VI/4	Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme	31 May 2000	17

SS.VI/1
Malmö Ministerial Declaration

The Governing Council

Adopts the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, the text of which is annexed to the present decision.

5th meeting
31 May 2000

Annex
Malmö Ministerial Declaration

We, Ministers of Environment and heads of delegation, meeting in Malmö, Sweden, from 29 to 31 May 2000, on the occasion of the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, to enable the world's environment ministers to gather to review important and emerging environmental issues and to chart a course for the future,

Recalling the Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment,[a] the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[b] the Declaration of Barbados on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[c] and the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme,[d]

Deeply concerned that, despite the many successful and continuing efforts of the international community since the Stockholm Conference, and despite some progress having been achieved, the environment and the natural resource base that supports life on Earth continue to deteriorate at an alarming rate,

Reaffirming the importance of the speedy implementation of the political and legal commitments entered into by the international community, in particular at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Convinced that urgent and renewed efforts are required to be undertaken by all countries in a spirit of international solidarity, and recognizing, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, as contained in the Rio Declaration to manage the environment so as to promote sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations,

Conscious that the root causes of global environmental degradation are embedded in social and economic problems such as pervasive poverty, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, inequity in distribution of wealth, and the debt burden,

Also conscious that success in combating environmental degradation is dependent on the full participation of all actors in society, an aware and educated population, respect for ethical and spiritual values and cultural diversity, and protection of indigenous knowledge,

Aware that the ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, to be conducted in 2002, will provide a further opportunity for the international community to take action to implement its commitments and to strengthen the international cooperation urgently required to address the challenges of sustainable development in the twenty-first century,

Convinced that the Millennium Summit of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly provides a unique opportunity to address at the highest level the role of the United Nations in the field of sustainable development, and noting in this regard the proposals of the Secretary-General contained in his report "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century",[e] which will serve as the basis of discussion at the Summit,

Determined to contribute to this historic endeavour from an environmental perspective, and having requested the President of the Governing Council to bring the following matters to the attention of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, the Millennium Assembly,

Declare that:

Major environmental challenges of the twenty-first century

1. The year 2000 marks a defining moment in the efforts of the international community to ensure that the growing trends of environmental degradation that threaten the sustainability of the planet are arrested and reversed. Hence, there is an urgent need for reinvigorated international cooperation based on common concerns and a spirit of international partnership and solidarity.

2. There is an alarming discrepancy between commitments and action. Goals and targets agreed upon by the international community in relation to sustainable development, such as the adoption of

national sustainable development strategies and increased support to developing countries, must be implemented in a timely fashion. The mobilization of domestic and international resources, including development assistance far beyond current levels, is vital to the success of this endeavour.

3. The evolving framework of international environmental law and the development of national law provide a sound basis for addressing the major environmental threats of the day. It must be underpinned by a more coherent and coordinated approach among international environmental instruments. We must also recognize the central importance of environmental compliance, enforcement and liability, and promote the observation of the precautionary approach as contained in the Rio Declaration and other important policy tools, as well as capacity-building.

4. The Global Environment Outlook 2000 of the United Nations Environment Programme provides a compelling assessment of the serious nature of the environmental threats faced by the international community. Special attention should be paid to unsustainable consumption patterns among the richer segments in all countries, particularly developed countries. Environmental stewardship is lagging behind economic and social development, and a rapidly growing population is placing increased pressures on the environment.

5. Environmental threats resulting from the accelerating trends of urbanization and the development of megacities, the tremendous risk of climate change, the freshwater crisis and its consequences for food security and the environment, the unsustainable exploitation and depletion of biological resources, drought and desertification, and uncontrolled deforestation, increasing environmental emergencies, the risk to human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals, and land-based sources of pollution, are all issues that need to be addressed.

6. Opportunities, however, exist that can redress this situation. Technological innovation and the emergence of new resource-efficient technologies, in which the private sector plays a major role, provide a source of great hope and increased opportunities for avoiding environmentally destructive practices of the past, including the use of clean technologies.

7. To confront the underlying causes of environmental degradation and poverty, we must integrate environmental considerations into the mainstream of decision-making. We must also intensify our efforts in developing preventive action and a concerted response, including national environmental governance and the international rule of law, awareness-raising and education, and harness the power of information technology to this end. All actors involved must work together in the interest of a sustainable future.

8. It is necessary that the environmental perspective be taken into account in both the design and the assessment of macro-economic policy-making and in the practices of government and multilateral lending and credit institutions, such as export credit agencies.

9. The trends of globalization in the world economy, with its attendant environmental risks and opportunities, require that international institutions adopt new approaches and engage the major actors involved in globalization in new ways. We should encourage a balanced and integrated approach to trade and environment policies in pursuit of sustainable development, in accordance with the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session.

10. The role and responsibility of nations, based on the Rio Declaration, and the role and responsibility of the main actors, including Governments, the private sector and civil society, must be emphasized in addressing the environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. Governments are the primary agents in this process, for their actions are vital in implementing United Nations environment-related instruments since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, institutional capacity-building and strengthened international cooperation.

The private sector and the environment

11. The private sector has emerged as a global actor that has a significant impact on environmental trends through its investment and technology decisions. In this regard, Governments have a crucial role in creating an enabling environment. The institutional and regulatory capacities of Governments to interact with the private sector should be enhanced. A greater commitment by the private sector should be pursued so as to engender a new culture of environmental

accountability through the application of the polluter-pays principle, environmental performance indicators and reporting, and the establishment of a precautionary approach in investment and technology decisions. This approach must be linked to the development of cleaner and more resource-efficient technologies for a life-cycle economy and efforts to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

12. The potential of the new economy to contribute to sustainable development should be further pursued, particularly in the areas of information technology, biology and biotechnology. The ethical and social implications must be carefully considered. There must be recognition of the public interest in knowledge related to biodiversity, including the interest of indigenous and local communities. A corporate ethic guided by public interest should be promoted.

13. The Global Compact established by the Secretary-General with the private sector provides an excellent vehicle for the development of a constructive engagement with the private sector. The United Nations Environment Programme should continue to enhance its engagement and collaboration with the private sector and consider the relation between foreign direct investment and the environment, with a view to minimizing negative environmental implications.

Civil society and the environment

14. Civil society plays a critically important role in addressing environmental issues. The role, capabilities and involvement of civil society organizations has seen a substantial increase in recent years, which highlights the need for national Governments and for the United Nations Environment Programme and international organizations to enhance the engagement of those organizations in their work on environmental matters.

15. Civil society has found new and effective modes of expression of popular sentiments and concerns. It is a powerful agent for promoting shared environmental purpose and values. Civil society plays an important role in bringing emerging environmental issues to the attention of policy makers, raising public awareness, promoting innovative ideas and approaches, and promoting transparency and non-corrupt activities in environmental decision-making.

16. The role of civil society at all levels should be strengthened through freedom of access to environmental information to all, broad participation in environmental decision-making, and access to justice on environmental issues. Governments should promote conditions that facilitate the ability of all parts of society to have a voice and play an active role in creating a sustainable future.

17. Science provides the basis for environmental decision-making. There is a need for intensified research, fuller engagement of the scientific community and increased scientific cooperation on emerging environmental issues, and improved avenues for communication between the scientific community, decision makers and other stakeholders.

18. We must pay special attention to threats to cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, in particular of indigenous and local communities, which may be posed by globalization. In this context we welcome the proclamation by the General Assembly of the year 2001 as the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

19. Greater emphasis must be given to a gender perspective in decision-making concerning the management of the environment and natural resources.

20. There is a need for independent and objective media at all levels in enhancing awareness and developing shared environmental values in global society. The media can serve the cause of sustainable development by identifying emerging issues, raising awareness and promoting appropriate action.

Review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002

21. The 2002 review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should be undertaken by an international conference at the summit level. The objective should not be to renegotiate Agenda 21, which remains valid, but to inject a new spirit of cooperation and urgency based on agreed actions in the common quest for sustainable development. In this regard, the ratification of all environmental conventions and protocols, in particular those related to climate, desertification, biosafety and chemicals, should be urgently pursued by Governments.

22. Governments and the United Nations Environment Programme must play a major role in preparation for the 2002 review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at the

regional and global levels and ensure that the environmental dimension of sustainable development is fully considered on the basis of a broad assessment of the state of the global environment. The preparations for the review should be accelerated.

23. The review conference in 2002 should aim at addressing the major challenges to sustainable development, and in particular the pervasive effects of the burden of poverty on a large proportion of the Earth's inhabitants, counterposed against excessive and wasteful consumption and inefficient resource use which perpetuate the vicious circle of environmental degradation and increasing poverty.

24. The conference in 2002 should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance, based on an assessment of future needs for an institutional architecture that has the capacity effectively to address wide-ranging environmental threats in a globalizing world. The role of the United Nations Environment Programme in this regard should be strengthened and its financial base broadened and made more predictable.

Conclusion

25. At the dawn of this new century, we have at our disposal the human and material resources to achieve sustainable development, not as an abstract concept but as a concrete reality. The unprecedented developments in production and information technologies, the emergence of a younger generation with a clear sense of optimism, solidarity and values, of women increasingly aware and with an enhanced and active role in society — all point to the emergence of a new consciousness. We can decrease poverty by half by 2015 without degrading the environment; we can ensure environmental security through early warning; we can better integrate environmental considerations into economic policy; we can better coordinate legal instruments; and we can realize a vision of a world without slums. We commit ourselves to realizing this common vision.

SS.VI/2
Activities of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Governing Council

1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the report on the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme presented by the Executive Director[f] and the valuable comments made thereon;

2. *Commends* the Executive Director for presenting the report in a consolidated manner, focusing on the five agreed priorities;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to take into account comments made in the further elaboration of the water policy and strategy and further requests him to take the necessary measures for its implementation and to report on the progress made to the Governing Council at its twenty-first session;

4. *Welcomes* the information provided in the Executive Director's report on budgetary and financial matters,[g] and requests that future activity reports to the Governing Council and to the Committee of Permanent Representatives should present a clear correlation between relevant decisions of the Governing Council and other legislative bodies, activities and resources set aside, actual budget expenditure, and qualitative evaluation of results achieved.

5th meeting
31 May 2000

SS.VI/3
Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

The Governing Council

1. *Requests* the Committee of Permanent Representatives to review, on its behalf, the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21;

2. *Calls upon* the Executive Director, to that end, to prepare a report for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to be distributed to all Governments for their information

and comments, and to ensure the active contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the preparatory process for the ten-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

3. *Further requests* the Executive Director to submit a final version of the above-mentioned report, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit a report on this matter to the Governing Council at its twenty-first session.

5th meeting
31 May 2000

SS.VI/4
Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum /twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Governing Council

1. *Decides* to include an item entitled "Outcome of the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum" on the provisional agenda of the Governing Council at its twenty-first session;[h]

2. *Requests* the Bureau of the Governing Council, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and with the support of the Executive Director, to decide on the organizational aspects of the ministerial-level consultations at the second Global Ministerial Environment Forum/twenty-first session of the Governing Council, and to decide on the themes for those consultations.

5th meeting
31 May 2000

Notes

[a] *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14), part one, chap. I.

[b] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[c] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 26 April-6 May 1994* (A/CONF.167/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[d] Governing Council decision 19/1, annex.

[e] A/54/2000.

[f] UNEP/GCSS.VI/6 and Add.1/Rev.1.

[g] UNEP/GCSS.VI/6, annex I.

[h] See UNEP/GC.20/48.

Annex II

Report of the Committee of the Whole

Rapporteur: Mr. Bernard O. K'Omudho (Kenya)

Introduction

1. In pursuance of the decisions of the Governing Council on the organization of the work of the session (see paras. 29-32), the Committee of the Whole held three meetings on 29 and 30 May 2000 under the chairmanship of Mr. Leandro Arellano (Mexico), Vice-President of the Council, to consider agenda items 7, 8 and 10.

2. At its 1st meeting, on 29 May 2000, the Committee of the Whole appointed Mr. Bernard O. K'Omudho (Kenya) as Rapporteur for the session.

3. During the deliberations in the Committee of the Whole, the secretariat introduced each item considered, after which representatives expressed their views thereon.

Item 7. Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme

4. In considering agenda item 7, the Committee had before it the following documentation:

(a) UNEP/GCSS.VI/6, containing substantial reporting and information material;

(b) UNEP/GCSS.VI/6/Add.1/Rev.1, on the water policy and strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Both documents covered the period since the twentieth session of the Governing Council. The Executive Director's report focused on the priority areas defined by the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, adopted at the nineteenth session of the Governing Council, and the five areas of concentration approved at the fifth special session of the Governing Council. The Committee decided to consider the reporting on UNEP activities and the UNEP water policy and strategy as two separate issues. It was also agreed, however, that those representatives who wished to express their views on both issues at the same time could do so.

Activities of the United Nations Environment Programme

5. The item was taken up by the Committee at its 1st meeting, on 29 May 2000, and was introduced by the secretariat.

6. During the general discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Australia, Canada, China, Cuba, Cyprus, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malawi, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, the United States of America, Venezuela and Zambia. Some of the representatives also spoke on item 7 (b).

7. The secretariat responded to questions raised and comments made by representatives on the item.

Water policy and strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme

8. The item was taken up by the Committee at its 1st meeting and introduced by the secretariat, which identified the main components of the water policy and strategy as assessment, management and coordination of actions. All three components stressed the cross-sectoral nature of water issues, and one of the goals of the new policy and strategy would be to identify and promote the tools that would address the critical water issues facing humanity and the environment.

9. During the discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Algeria, Australia, Canada, China, India, Jordan, Norway, Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the United States of America. Statements were also made by the representatives of WMO and UNESCO.

10. The secretariat responded to the questions raised and remarks made by representatives on the item.

11. At the end of its deliberations on both issues, the Committee considered and approved a draft decision summarizing the discussions held on these issues, for transmission to the plenary (for the text of the decision adopted, see annex I above, decision SS.VI/2).

12. With respect to paragraph 4 of the decision, the Deputy Executive Director reassured the Committee that, while the secretariat would do its utmost to ensure the requested reporting, there were practical difficulties involved in changing the existing financial reporting system. The Executive Director would therefore inform the Council on the matter through the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Item 8. Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

13. Item 8 was taken up by the Committee at its 2nd meeting, on 30 May 2000, and was introduced by the secretariat. The Director of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, also addressed the item and explained the process and expectations of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

14. In its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it document UNEP/GCSS.VI/7, which contained a proposed process of preparation for the 10-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

15. During the discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Argentina, Barbados, Canada, China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, the United States of America and Venezuela.

16. The secretariat responded to the questions raised and comments made by representatives on the item.

17. At the end of its deliberations on the item, the Committee considered and approved a draft decision summarizing the discussions, for transmission to the plenary (for the text of the decision adopted, see annex I above, decision SS.VI/3).

Item 10. Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

18. Item 10 was taken up by the Committee at its 3rd meeting, on 30 May 2000, and was introduced by the secretariat.

19. During the discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Australia, Canada, Portugal (on behalf of the European Union) and Sweden. The Committee recalled that at its twentieth session, the Council had approved a provisional agenda for its twenty-first session (UNEP/GC.20/48).

20. The Committee approved a draft decision for transmission to the plenary (for the text of the decision adopted, see annex I above, decision SS.VI/4).

21. At its 3rd meeting, the Committee of the Whole adopted the present report and the decisions contained therein, as orally amended, by consensus.

Annex III

List of documents before the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/sixth special session of the Governing Council

Symbol[a]	*Title*
UNEP/GCSS.VI/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP/GCSS.VI/1/Add.1 and Corr.1	Annotated provisional agenda and organization of work
UNEP/GCSS.VI/6	Report of the Executive Director on activities of the United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP/GCSS.VI/6/Add.1/Rev.1	Water policy and strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP/GCSS.VI/7	Proposed process of preparation for the 10-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNEP/GCSS.VI/8	Discussion papers presented by the Executive Director

[a] No documents were issued under the symbols UNEP/GCSS.VI/2-5.

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